B NWA/FNS WIC STRATEGIC PLANNING CORE/FUTURE MIS FUNCTIONS

CERTIFICATION PERIOD—CORE FUNCTION

The system automatically calculates the date the certification is due to expire for each participant. The system does this by adding the appropriate number of days to the certification date that is captured in the system during certification.

NUTRITION RISK AND PRIORITY STATUS—CORE FUNCTION

Based on the nutrition and health information entered into the system by the CPA, and the priority system established by Program regulations, the system assigns the participant a nutrition risk code and assigns a priority level. Where multiple risk factors exist, the system stores risk factors for each participant and assigns the highest applicable priority. At the State agency's discretion, the CPA may override the code generated by the system.

INCOME ELIGIBILITY—CORE FUNCTION

Based on information provided by applicants and established income eligibility guidelines, the system calculates the applicant's income and flags individuals whose income exceeds program standards. For those determined to be eligible, the system automatically stores the information in the participant's certification record. Where the applicant is determined eligible based on adjunctive income eligibility, this information is also stored in the system.

SOURCE OF INCOME—FUTURE CORE FUNCTION

The system is used to document the source of income information (i.e. pay stubs, letter from Medicaid, etc.).

ASSOCIATE FAMILY MEMBERS—CORE FUNCTION

Clinic staff enter information that applies to all family members into the system only once. The system automatically updates or modifies the participant records of all associated family members by linking the common family ID. The

statewide family ID is used to facilitate coordination of certification periods for family members, transferring families within the system, and food package tailoring when several family members are eligible to receive the full package.

In addition, the system allows the user to print all of the food instruments for all members within a family when the parent or guardian is present for pickup. This is possible because the system is programmed to associate all family members with a family group ID. Upon command, the computer sorts the food instruments by family, grouping instruments for each individual within the family, and prints those food instruments associated with the family when they are present for pickup.

TRANSFER OF CERTIFICATION—CORE FUNCTION

The system enables local staff to easily transfer the participant from one agency to another. To facilitate transfers within the State, the system maintains statewide data on all certified participants. The staff at the participant's new location are able to access the participant's file via the statewide family identification number to find out what foods were issued at the former local agency and when they were last issued as well as other information useful in providing continued health and nutrition related services.

AUTOMATED DIETARY ASSESSMENT—FUTURE CORE FUNCTION

The foods consumed over a period of time by the participant are entered into the computer and the system automatically assigns a score based on the food's nutrient value. The system automatically flags scores determined to be low.

AUTOMATED GROWTH CHARTS—FUTURE CORE FUNCTION

Height, weight, and head circumference (for infants) are entered into the system and the system graphically plots the individual's growth and/or provides the nutritionist with the calculated percentiles.

ELECTRONIC CERTIFICATION DATA TRANSMISSION—CORE FUNCTION

Participant certification data are sent to the central computer facility electronically either in real time or batched mode. Paper forms are not sent through the mail.

POINT OF CERTIFICATION DATA ENTRY—FUTURE CORE FUNCTION

The information that makes up the participant's certification record is entered directly onto the computer. Optimally, no information is handwritten on paper for data entry onto the computer at a later time, except for when information is collected off-site (i.e. in a nonpermanent location such as a mobile van or other temporary clinic location) where a computer may not be available.

A computer is readily available to all staff that have a need to enter information into a participant's certification record. This may include staff who collect basic eligibility information; record height/weight measurements, blood work, and immunizations; record nutrition education received; provide/record referral to other services; and issue food packages and food instruments. At the State agency's option, the computer could be connected to a printer so a copy of the certification record could be printed and filed or the file could be maintained electronically. States may also maintain limited documentation in paper files such as applicant signatures on rights and responsibility forms and proxy signature, or may utilize electronic signatures.

TRACK NUTRITION EDUCATION CONTACTS AND TOPICS COVERED—CORE FUNCTION

The system captures the nutrition education provided to each program participant throughout the certification period as well as nutrition education topics covered during nutrition education training.

CREATE FOOD PRESCRIPTION—CORE FUNCTION

The system supports this function by allowing the CPA to select a food package for issuance to a participant from a table of standard, pre-defined packages. However, the certifying official has the flexibility to alter a standard package or

develop a new package from scratch by quickly selecting food items from a table to construct the package. The system is programmed with edits that prevent the user from issuing foods that are disallowed or quantities of food that exceed the regulatory limit based on participant category.

ISSUE BENEFITS ON-DEMAND—CORE FUNCTION

Printing is done for each participant at the time the participant is present to pick up the food instruments. With this system there is no need to fill out a food instrument by hand or to print any food instruments in advance. The printing of food instruments on-demand reflects the most recent food package prescribed for the participant, and may include adjustments to the food package recorded in the system before printing to reflect late pickup of the instruments, as well as other anticipated changes such as category change (i.e., infant to child). This approach to printing food instruments is also used to reissue food instruments that are lost or stolen from the client.

To support this function, the WIC information system prints the food instruments corresponding to the selected participant's food package, identifies the valid period for the instrument, and maintains a record of food instruments issued. Each food instrument issued (with the exception of prorated food instruments) is valid for one month that, depending on State program policy, may be either a calendar month, or a month that starts with the issue date of the instrument. The system also retains internal records of all food instruments issued to support subsequent food instrument reconciliation and provides a complete audit trail.

TRACK REFERRALS TO OTHER PROGRAMS—CORE FUNCTION

The system captures the name of the programs to which the participant was referred.

PERFORM RECONCILIATION—CORE FUNCTION

Issuance information includes the name of the participant, the participant's ID, the food instrument serial number, the food package prescribed, the date the food instrument was issued, the date the food instrument expires, and the estimated

value of the food instrument. Redeemed food instruments are processed through regular banking channels or through the State payment system for payment to the vendor's account. Each food instrument redeemed is matched with the issuance data maintained in the system, and a monthly report is produced that shows a summary of the disposition of food instruments and expenditures.

The summary shows the number of food instrument redeemed, voided because they expired, were never issued, or because they were replaced; unclaimed because the participant failed to pick up the food instrument at the clinic, issued but unredeemed because the participant failed to redeem the food instrument they received, or unmatched because the serial number did not match with the serial number of the food instrument issued. The unmatched food instruments appear in an exception file, and the State agency must follow up on each one to ensure it was properly issued. With the use of on-demand food instrument printing, these unclaimed, voided, and unmatched food instruments are significantly reduced. On-demand benefit issuance enables greater food instrument control and accountability. With this system nearly all food instruments redeemed can be reconciled with issuance information.

DUAL PARTICIPATION REPORTING—CORE FUNCTION

The local worker has access to statewide data to determine whether a duplicate record exists on an individual who is newly certified for WIC. In an on-line system, the information is available immediately. In a distributed system, preliminary demographic data is recorded in the system. The information is matched against the database periodically to identify clinics where the applicant may already be participating.

When two separate State agencies operate within a State (i.e., a geographic State agency and an Indian Tribal Organization, or WIC and CSFP) the system produces a data tape or an electronic file for exchange. One or both of the State agencies involved perform a participant data match. This information is used to flag possible instances of dual participation for follow up action.

THE INTEGRITY PROFILE (TIP)—CORE FUNCTION

The WIC information system produces report data in accordance with the existing specifications, and produce other vendor management reports deemed necessary by the State agency.

REBATE BILLING REPORT(S)—CORE FUNCTION

Based on redemption data, the system produces a report that shows the number of cans of formula purchased by brand name and by type, and the month the food instrument was valid for participant use. In addition, the number of full versus partial infant formula packages can be identified. The system also provides rebate billing reports for rebated foods other than infant formula.

PARTICIPATION REPORT(S)—CORE FUNCTION

The system produces reports that summarize the number of participants served during a specified time period, (e.g., month) and for a specified area (e.g., statewide, agency, clinic). This information is used for caseload management and funds management.

PARTICIPANT HEALTH DATASETS—CORE FUNCTION

The system produces a data tape for use in the biennial report to Congress on WIC Program and Participant Characteristics and files for use in the CDC Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) and Pregnancy Nutrition Surveillance System (PNSS).

AD HOC REPORTING—FUTURE CORE FUNCTION

The system is designed so data can be easily accessed. State agencies archive static information that does not need to be stored on the WIC information system but will be needed for future program management. Data systems are designed to store, retrieve and analyze data along a number of dimensions, including but not limited to:

- Caseload management
- Budget forecasting

- Employee and participant fraud detection
- Nutrition Monitoring

IDENTIFY REDEEMING VENDOR—CORE FUNCTION

The system is designed to accept basic transaction information pertaining to each authorized retailer either at the time of issuance (i.e., vendor-specific food instruments) or at the time of payment. Transactions are related to the vendor performing the redemption.

HIGH RISK VENDOR DETECTION SYSTEM—CORE FUNCTION

The system supports this function by flagging high-risk vendors based on suspicious redemption patterns. See functional description in Section 3 of the FRED.

PRICE EDITING FOR EXCESSIVE CHARGES—CORE FUNCTION

The system assigns a maximum value for each food instrument type. Once the food instrument is redeemed, the system automatically checks the redeemed price against the maximum value and rejects any food instrument exceeding the maximum amount.